

Greenville Recreation and Parks Department

Youth Flag Football Rules

NIRSA Rules will be used with the following modifications.

Start of Game

- Coaches and captains will meet at midfield, visiting team make the call of heads or tails.
 - Options are:
 - Offense
 - Defense (keep in mind you could end up playing defense for the start of both halves.)
 - Defer to the second half (if opposing coach chooses defense, then you could end of playing defense at the start of the second half)
1. Ages: 5-6, 7-8, 9-12 as of August 1
 2. Minimum Participation Requirements
 - a. Every substitute must enter the game when there is a change of possession.
 3. Each team will consist of a maximum of 8 players on the field with a minimum of 6 to start.
 - a. Both teams will play the same number of players.
 - b. Any offensive set will be permissible, providing that there are at least four (4) players on the line prior to the snap.
 - c. Any defense can be used and there are no limits to the amount of rushers on defense.
 4. The offense will have 30 seconds to snap the ball after the officials have put the ball in play.
 5. All players, except the quarterback, are eligible to catch a forward pass.
 6. The offensive team will have four (4) downs to make it across a “zone line” (which consists of the 15, 30, and 15-yard lines).
 - a. After crossing the line, assuming there are no penalties against the offense, the team in control of the drive will be awarded a new set of downs.
 - b. Three or four point stance is only permitted for the snapper.
 - c. The offensive team is in charge of retrieving the football.
 7. Punts will occur when the offensive team has not completed a first down. The ball will be placed on the line of scrimmage and the punter will be allowed to back up 3-5 yards.
 - a. Neither the offensive nor the defensive team will be allowed to move until the ball has been punted.
 - b. If the offensive team chooses to punt they are required to punt the ball and cannot fake any punt.
 - c. A team can only change their decision to punt if a time-out is called or a penalty occurs prior or during this down after the decision to punt is made and the penalty causes the down to be repeated.
 8. The rectangular field for ages 5-12 will have dimensions as such: 240 feet (80 yards) by 120 feet (40 yards)

9. Physical tackling, holding, stiff-arming and deliberate roughness will not be permitted at anytime.
- Tackling is considered once a ball carrier's flag belt has been safely removed, without penalty, and the play is whistled dead.
 - At no time can the ball carrier be restrained, held, or pushed.
 - Should the ball carrier's knees strike the ground in the midst of a run, then the play is to be ruled dead.
 - Furthermore, should a ball carrier's flag belt come off without being pulled, the defense must touch the runner (one or two hand tag) to stop play.
 - A ball carrier is not allowed to slap a defensive player's hands away. This is known as "flag-guarding" and will result in a 10-yard penalty from the spot of the infraction.

11. Blocking

- No part of the body except the feet shall be in contact with the ground and the feet must remain on the ground for the duration of the block.
- Blocking will be by **SCREENING ONLY**. That is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact.
- During a block, the body must remain upright with elbows and hands touching the body at the side or behind the back.
- While incidental contact may occur, blocking/pushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates contact.
- The defense may not use hands, arms, or legs as a wedge to gain an advantage over a blocker.

12. Game Length

- The game will be played in two (2) 16-minute halves.
- Prior to the start of the game, a coin toss will be conducted to see who has the ball first.
- The clock will be stopped during the last two minutes of the **second half** only for the following reasons:
 - Penalty
 - Official Time Out
 - Team Time Out
 - First Down (Clock starts immediately after referee marks the ball ready for play)
 - Injury on the field
 - Incomplete Legal or Illegal Forward Pass
 - Player Runs out of bounds
 - Safety or Touchdown
 - Touchback
 - Any new possession for a team
 - Inadvertent whistle
- The clock only stops in the first half for Official Time-Outs, Team Time-Outs, or Injury.
- Halftime will consist of five minutes.
- Each Team will be allowed one (1) timeout, lasting 60 seconds, per half.

• ***Timeouts will not carry over to the next half.***

13. Scoring
- a. Touchdown 6 points
 - b. Extra Point Run Back by Defense 3 points
 - c. Safeties 2 points
 - i. After a safety, the team who scored the safety will receive the ball on their 9-yard-line.
 - d. Conversion attempts
 - i. From the 3-yard line 1 point
 - ii. From the 5-yard line 2 points
 - iii. From the 10-yard line 3 points
 - e. ***Touchdown verification***-The player scoring the touchdown must raise their arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged with one pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, the player is disqualified and it is a foul.
 - f. Each possession by the offensive team, either to start a game, a half, or after a score, will be started on their own 9-yard line.
 - The offensive team will be given four (4) downs to cross the 15-yard line for a first down.
 - g. Ties will stand for regular season games.
14. Penalties
- a) The following will be 5 yard penalties:
 - Required equipment worn illegally
 - Delay of game (dead ball)
 - Illegally conserving or consuming time
 - Substitution rules infraction
 - Infraction of the punt formation – line players and/or kickers
 - Encroachment (dead ball)
 - False start (dead ball)
 - Illegal snap (dead ball)
 - Offensive player not within 15 yards of the ball
 - Infraction of the scrimmage formation
 - Player out of bounds when ball is snapped
 - Illegal motion
 - Illegal shift
 - Intentionally throwing a backward pass or fumbling out of bounds (loss of down)
 - Illegal forward pass (loss of down)
 - Intentional grounding (loss of down)
 - Helping the runner
 - b) The following will be 10 yard penalties:
 - Flag Guarding
 - Holding

- Illegal player equipment (belt loops, pockets, flag belt secured illegally)
 - Quick kick (punts must be declared)
 - Kick catch interference
 - Offense pass interference (loss of down)
 - Defensive pass interference (automatic first down)
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct
 - Strip or attempt to strip the ball
 - Contact with an opponent on the ground (tripping or holding)
 - Throw runner to the ground
 - ***Hurdling or Jumping over any player***
 - Unnecessary contact of any nature
 - Drive or run into player (offensive or defensive)
 - Position upon shoulders or body of a teammate
 - Tackle to runner
 - Roughing the passer
 - Illegal offensive screen blocking
 - Interlock interference
 - Defensive use of the hands
 - Obstructing or holding the runner
 - Batting a free ball
 - Illegal kicking
 - Illegal participation
 - Illegal flag belt removal
 - Intentionally kicking, swinging an arm, hand or fist at opposing player (ejection)
 - Intentionally contacting an official (***ejection***)
 - Flagrant personal fouls such as spiking, kicking, throwing the ball, fighting etc.
- A. No penalty can move the ball over half the distance to the goal line.
15. When the flag is cleanly taken from a ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead.
 - a. A player who removes the flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.
 - b. **No flag guarding** such as slapping with the hand or stiff-arming.
 16. Under no circumstances, will any player be permitted to jump or hurdle another player (10-yard penalty).
 17. One coach from each team will be allowed on the playing field during a game.
 - a. Substitute players and assistant coaches must stay on the far sidelines in the center of the field between the 15-yard lines.
 18. Coaches are expected to closely observe their players at all times to be certain that none are overly fatigued.
 19. No player will be allowed to play until one has signed permission slip from ones parents/guardians.

20. **Coaches are expected to set good examples of sportsmanship for their players.** They should not tolerate poor conduct either in practices or games. **No profanity or poor sportsmanship, from either players or coaches, will be tolerated.**
21. **No argument concerning the judgment of an official will be allowed at anytime.** A question of interpretation should be discussed by coaches/officials only after time has been called.
22. Overtime Rules for Playoffs (Ages 7-12):
 - a. Coaches and captains will meet at midfield and the visiting team make the call of heads or tails
 - b. Options are:
 - Offense
 - Defense
 - c. Each team will start 1st & Goal from the 10-yard line, the object is to score a touchdown. Teams will have 4 downs to score. If the score remains tied after 1st overtime, the game will continue until there is a winner.
 - d. If the first team with the ball scores, the opponent will still have a chance to tie/win the game.
 - e. Extra Points will be attempted after each score.
 - f. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for the touchdown, the series is over, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line and the original defense will now be on offense.
 - g. Each Team will be allowed one (1) timeout, lasting 60 seconds
 - Timeouts from the previous half or overtime will not carryover.
 - h. Penalties are administered similar to the regular game.
 - Only way to get a first down is by accepting a first down foul (Ex. Roughing the Passer).
 - The goal line is **always** the zone-line-to-gain in overtime.
22. Other Points of Interest:
 - a. The Center Sneak Play is a legal play.
 - b. Parents are not allowed on player side of the field, only coaches.
 - c. Coaches/Players must stay between the 15-yard lines during the game.
 - d. Coaches/Players are required to stay out of the way of the scorekeeper and referees along the sidelines. Any violation of this can result in a sideline infraction penalty. This is in the referee's judgment.
 - e. It is the responsibility of the coaches to call the Elm Street (329-4650) for game status and call members of their teams about cancellations due to inclement weather.